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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 QUITO 002683

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DEPT PASS TO TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL - ISMAEL C. MIKE GALVAN

REF: SECSTATE 213482

1. Post welcomes and grants country clearance to Transportation Security Administration personnel Ismael C. Mike Galvan to Quito, Ecuador December 7-9, 2005 to attend exit briefings with host government and airport officials as a follow-up to the TSA airport assessment at Guayaquil. Embassy POC is Econ Officer Paul Baldwin. Embassy telephone is: 593-2-256-2890, ext. 4426; cell phone number 099-442-552. Please read the following paragraphs carefully.

2. All personnel transferring to an overseas location under COM authority must complete appropriate overseas personal security training prior to travel. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring office to verify that this training has been completed.

3. All passengers, U.S. and third country nationals, who enter Ecuador on official travel require a visa. There is an airport departure fee of USD 25 for departing passengers using international flights. DOD personnel participating in GOE-approved deployments and exercises, and arriving with military orders, are exempt from the visa requirement and may travel on military orders.

4. Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must bring/forward fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization, or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to their visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES staff overtime (e.g., expediter, accommodation exchange, representational event support), field travel-lodging and M&IE by Embassy employees, vehicle rentals, long distance telephone calls, equipment rentals, office supplies and all other costs that are directly attributable to the visit. Also, for TDYers over thirty 30) days, there is a charge for ICASS support services. If our sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services to post, please be prepared to sign a MOU for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with written communication, generated by the traveler's headquarters that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYers, provides the agency ICASS billing code the TDY support charges should be applied to, and authorizes the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is urgent, the TDYers should bring this documentation with them to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide any service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

5. The State Department has designated Quito and Guayaquil as critical for criminal threat. Usually, crimes are of a non-violent nature such as pick pocketing, burglary of personal effects and thefts from vehicles. However, violent crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery and car-jacking are increasing throughout Ecuador, especially in the urban areas. Sexual assault cases against visitors in beach resort areas have occurred with regularity and none of the beaches are considered safe to walk on at night.

6. In Quito, extreme caution should be taken in tourist areas, transit points and crowded marketplaces, especially on the crowded streets of south Quito, buses and trolleys, the Panecillo (a city overlook point) and all transportation terminals. For Guayaquil, caution should be taken when in the downtown section of the city, with extra caution taken while in the Malecon 2000 river front district, the docks and airport areas. There have been many reports of luggage theft at the airport.

7. To avoid being the victim of a crime, visitors should remain alert to their surroundings and maintain constant control of purses, backpacks, briefcases and luggage. Extra care should be taken with belongings if traveling on buses or trolleys. Do not place bags or backpacks under your seat especially if they contain documents or money. The use of some type of document pouch worn inside of clothing is recommended. Expensive-appearing jewelry and watches should not be worn. Poor road conditions, free ranging animals,

unsafe vehicles and drivers dictate against night travel outside urban areas.

18. Official visitors intending to travel into the Northern border provinces are required to seek permission through the RSO and DCM seven days prior to the planned travel. A formal process is established for this request.

19. Travelers to the capital city of Quito may require some time to adjust to the altitude (9,300 feet), which can adversely affect blood pressure, digestion, sleep and energy level. Most people, even those who are healthy and fit, feel some symptoms of hypoxia (lack of oxygen) upon arrival in Quito. Persons with medical conditions related to the circulatory or respiratory systems, (high blood pressure, history of coronary heart disease, emphysema, for example) and anyone with sickle cell anemia, should ask their physician if travel to Quito or other high-altitude locations is advisable. U.S. government employees who do not have a class I medical clearance are requested to check with M/MED before planning travel to Quito. Diamox, a medication commonly prescribed to aid with acclimatization, is not generally required for travel to Quito. However, it is advisable to limit physical activity and drink plenty of nonalcoholic beverages for the first two to three days after arriving in Quito.

Individuals with sickle cell trait should carefully consider the altitude of Quito before commencing with travel. Short term (TDY) assignments carry an added risk because of the lack of time for acclimatization. Dehydration and stress from exercise or illness compound the basic risks of high altitude. For more information, contact your health unit or the medical, clearances section of the Offices of Medical Services.

10. Visitors receiving country clearance should be aware that all interview requests, be they for backgrounding or on-the-record statements, for USG officials are vetted through PAS in Quito. For visiting FSNs, please be advised that only requests for backgrounding or off-the-record context-setting will be considered and that these requests must also be vetted through PAS/Quito. If a journalist approaches you for a statement/interview/ reaction, please contact Press Specialist Renata Barragan at (02) 250-2053.
JEWELL